

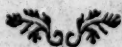
A
Seasonable Antidote
AGAINST THE
P O I S O N
OF
POPULAR CENSURE.

BEING THE
Substance of a LETTER from a Noble Lord
to a Member of Parliament,

Relative to the Case of a certain

Right Honourable General.

The SECOND EDITION.



L O N D O N :

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SEASONABLE ANTIDOTE

AGAINST THE

Poison of Popular Censure.

S I R, *August* 16, 1759.

I Shall begin this letter with congratulating you (as I do most sincerely) upon the glorious success which the allied army have lately gained against the French in Hanover. An event so happy in its consequences, and one, which must unavoidably give the King such extreme satisfaction, cannot fail of being acceptable in the highest degree to every loyal subject : but every Englishman, I am sure, who has the least feeling

for the honour of his country, must be touched in a particular manner, when he finds the Hanoverian general acknowledging, next to God, that to the vigour and prowess of the British troops, he stands indebted for his victory.

This is at once a proof of his princely gratitude, and impartial justice, as well as of their meritorious service ; but why, why cannot so distinguishing a mark of approbation come to us unallayed ? and why must his highness, while he is taking such pains to pay his compliments to the body of the British troops, be as ostentatious on the other hand of affronting their head, not by open reproaches, but by hints and inuendoes ; or, what is worse, a contemptuous silence ?

I am unwilling to make use of an indecent expression ; but surely, the general who acts in this way, ought to have good grounds for so unprecedented

mented a behaviour ; or, shall we say that it is of no consequence to expose an illustrious character to the obloquy of the worst suspicions : one which hath hitherto stood the fairest in the public opinion ; in the praises of which our senates have so constantly concurred ; the hope of a most noble and antient family ; and whose reputation, till now, has been as spotless as his conduct was unblameable.

If this be the case, who will serve in our fleets and armies ? No man of rank or fortune, I am sure, who has common sense, even in the cause of his country, will run the risk of putting himself into such a disagreeable situation ; for, supposing that nothing lay at stake, and no ill consequences could follow it, what a shocking and painful thing must it be to a truly delicate mind, to be thought capable of doing any thing that needs the formality of a defence ?

But,

But does it not look as if the English affairs were under some fatality? Only take a retrospect of the last three years transactions, and then imagine in what light our people must be looked on by the rest of Europe; either they must think that there are very few brave, sensible, or honest men among us, or they must think us mad. You smile at this assertion, but, upon my word, you will find it no less than just to a demonstration.

Every one remembers, that this war no sooner commenced, than it was thought necessary to dismiss a lieutenant-general, and put an admiral ignominiously to death for cowardice, disaffection, or non-obedience of orders. But, sir, what then proceeded from fatal necessity, seems to have since been adopted into a system; and the Athenian state was never more capricious in the treatment of those who undertook her battles, than Britain has been from the time of Mr. Byng,

Byng, and Mr. Fowkes's unlucky misdemeanors.

Do not imagine from this, that I am a favourer of those, who through cowardice, disaffection, error in judgment, or any other cause whatsoever, may, in any service they have undertaken to perform, be instrumental to the danger or disgrace of their country. Far from it: on the contrary, I think that no rank should set them out of the reach of justice; no fortune shield them from it; nor any interest, though never so powerful, when once they are brought before her tribunal, influence the sentence which is passed upon them.

Yet after I have avowed all this, after I have professed myself in the strongest manner an advocate for those measures, which may tend most effectually to the national glory, the punishment of our weak or wicked friends, and the injury of our open and professed enemies; yet, let me
say,

say, that I am not a friend to indiscriminate disapprobation of every person's conduct, who takes upon him the command of our forces on whatsoever expedition it happens; whether through the unavoidable miscarriage of the enterprize, or the premature censure of the proud or discontented; much less am I for dragging every man to the bar like a criminal, because I happened once or twice to do it in the right place; such a conduct proceeds from caprice, not justice.

But perhaps you will ask me to give you some instance of a conduct like this in the English. I have already hinted, that I thought this whole war a continued series of them: I repeat this again.

Are there not, at present, two gentlemen, one of which is still in our service; the other indeed, thro' a just indignation upon such unmerited treatment, has thrown up his
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commission, that were served in the very manner I complain of.

The first was a veteran officer, who both in public and private life had maintained a most immaculate character ; yet that could not screen him from popular censure, which grew so loud, that, as the only means of clearing his honour, he was obliged to have recourse to the disagreeable expedient of a court-martial ; where, after having been pursued with the utmost rigour of malevolent persecution, he was honourably acquitted, it being proved that there could not be the least fault found with his conduct, to the great credit of those who witnessed against him, and of that rash public, which is ever ready to join in the cry against a countryman that has undertaken their service, be he never so innocent.

However, we will allow that in general M---d---t's case there was some shadow for accusation, because

B

he

he did not, in that expedition against the coast of France, so fully answer the expectations of his country : but with regard to Mr. B---gh, it was the direct contrary, since Providence was pleased to favour him with all the success which even the most sanguine could have wished for ; and yet what was his reward ?

When he returned to England, was he not received with the frowns of power ; with the murmurs of the populace ? Was he not even refused admittance to that presence, in which he must chiefly desire to appear well ? and not only so, but given to understand, that it was looked upon as a special grace that he was not dismissed his majesty's service, for in consideration of his great age, and long services, they did not choose to shoot him.

Nor, let me add, was this an accidental circumstance, which casually attended the service Mr. B---gh went upon :

upon : no ; it was known to be the system of politics then in vogue ; and for that reason a certain great personage, (whose memory all his acquaintance will ever preserve with the most tender reverence) after once taking upon himself such an expedition, and happily escaping the almost certain odium to which the commander in chief must be obnoxious, wisely declined any further meddling with them ; chusing rather to go where he thought he could serve his king and country with more honour, in every respect — Why must I add, to the grief of every Englishman, that in this service he lost his life !

This was the most noble John duke of M----l----gh ; and to him, as next in command, and not only so, but next in every rare-found quality necessary to accomplish the soldier and the gentleman, succeeded the right hon. lord G---- S-----.

It is not to be imagined that his majesty, or his ministry, would have reposed such a trust in a person on whose courage, conduct, and fidelity, they had not the most perfect reliance. Every body knows that a more important command never was conferred on any one, under the degree of captain-general; as the fate of Germany in a great measure depended upon the success of those forces, (joined with the allies) which were sent from England. Neither would they have been sent, during the present great aversion to continental measures, had not they been looked upon as the last resource, and the most happy advantages been expected from them.

These hopes have been answered, and He, who has been pleased to stile himself a Man of War, has not only blessed the allied army, in getting the better of that foe, whom, if we may credit report, was determined

mined for the utter destruction of the principality of Hanover, but granted them so compleat a victory, that the like has hardly been remembered, the number of the slain, wounded, and taken prisoners, being exceeded by nothing but the nature and richness of those spoils which were consequent of the victory ; for the French left every thing to the victors, even to the private equipages of their officers.

The result of such an agreeable piece of news, at the time of this very insolent, but now subdued, enemy's threatening us with an invasion at home, was, as it ought to be, a most excessive joy. The people sympathized with their sovereign ; and I believe there has scarcely been seen a more general jubilee of bonfires, ringing of bells, illuminations, and such like testimonies of national exultation, than appeared in London, on the night of that day which brought us an account of the glorious battle of Minden.

But

But behold ! scarce are those fires out, and the noise of the bells and cannon from our ears, than we are alarmed with a murmur of something which has been found fault with by the Hanoverian general in the British troops. He has thought proper, it seems, to fix a mark of reprobation upon them ; and, in order that it may appear more conspicuous, the head of those troops is sentenced to bear it. 'Tis true, indeed, to the English troops he in a great measure owes the victory he gained ; but it is set down to their general's fault, that he did not obtain one much more complete and brilliant.

Roused at the sound, we are at first at a loss whether to receive it with sorrow or indignation. We are excited to the first, by the fear of our commander in chief's having incurred a just censure, which, through him, may be a blot upon his native country : to the last, by the hope that
this

this is no more than the effects of spleen, and overbearing pride ; an insult offered in the person of an H---v---n prince, against a British nobleman.

And indeed, when we consider all circumstances, the person to whom this insult was offered, and the aggravating manner of offering it, there will be more than sufficient grounds to imagine that such is really the case.

For in bringing a charge against any person, it is not enough barely to say it is so and so ; the proof must be strong and evident. In like manner, neither are we to suspect persons of any crime at once, but we are to consider who he is ; what could be his motive for committing it ; how his character has always appeared in the eyes of mankind : and if, according to these tests, he must be acquitted in the opinion of all honest and impartial men, then, in the name
of

of God, let us act like such, or at least suspend our judgments, till we have heard the defendant, as well as the accuser.

But before we go any farther, let us try what ——— is accused ! Why, truly, the Hanoverian general has thought proper to thank many generals and officers, by name, for their great courage and conduct ; but takes no other notice of the British commander in chief, than what may be gathered from the following passage : *His highness farther orders it to be declared to lieutenant-general the marquis of Granby, that he is persuaded, that if he had had the good fortune to have had him at the head of the cavalry of the right wing, his presence would have greatly contributed to make the decision of the day more compleat and brilliant.* And again,

His highness desires, and orders the generals of his army, that upon all occasions, when orders are brought to
them

them by his aid de camps, that they be obeyed PUNCTUALLY, AND WITHOUT DELAY.

This is all of the matter that has hitherto transpired to public observation; but how quick is detraction and evil fame? Upon this grounds, insufficient as they are, we have already proceeded to spatter the character of a young nobleman with reproaches, and offer him such indignities, as that his name is already publicly cried about the streets by the voice of scorn, and vulgar derision.

But let us see what can be gathered from the foregoing obscure manner of accusation; that G---- S----- has either been guilty of cowardice, disaffection, treachery, or error in judgment; and it now only remains to try him, as every just person should, till matters are fully explained to us, by the rules I have already laid down; and then judge whether the person, circumstances, or known incli-

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nations

nations of the man, will hold with any of the above constructions.

And in the first place, as to the want of personal bravery, that being an affection of the mind, it is certainly confined to no particular race of men ; but those who are descended from antient and noble stocks have the greatest incitements to emulation, the best nurse of courage, and therefore we may reasonably allow, that they are in the fairest way to be free from pusillanimous and dastardly spirits. The family of S——le too has always been remarkable for its bravery, infomuch, that the grandsire of the nobleman who is the subject of the present discourse, was noted for writing a song on the eve of a battle : an instance of coolness and collected thought, almost incredible in such a situation.

But you will say successors may degenerate, ; 'tis granted: therefore
take :

take it in another light, and let me ask you, what signs did his lordship shew of cowardice; did he run away? No, on the contrary, he stood (that is imputed to him) the brunt of the enemy's fire: in which case, sure, if he was a coward, he was either a madman or a fool too; for such a method of seeking safety I believe never was taken: no, I will venture to affirm, that had he not been brave, he would not, he could not, have acted as he is confessed to have done.

Thus, then, drops the suspicion of cowardice: let us now enquire into the next article of imaginary attainder, namely, how far he may reasonably incur the suspicion of disaffection.

I take the word disaffection in its general acceptation, viz. dislike to the present government. I would be glad to know, what disgust L—— G—— S—— could have to the house
him,

of Hanover. Can any other house be more lavish of honours or profit to him, or his family? Has not the D—— of D——, his father, been twice lord-lieutenant of Ireland under it? Does he not, at present, enjoy one of the first employments, both for revenue and station? and is not my lord himself exalted to the highest pitch of grandeur in the walk of life which he has chosen to exercise himself in. Here then is the suspicion of disaffection taken off, for that can proceed from no cause but resentment, or self-interest, which it is shewn L—— G—— S—— cannot have; he must, therefore, be either a mad-man or a fool, which I believe no one will be so hardy as to accuse him of.

But how shall we clear him from the suspicion of treachery? French gold has powerful charms. I admit it; but then it has only charms for him

him who has not sufficient of the current coin of his own country. No one yet was ever so abandoned to shame, and every virtue, I hope, as to take a sum of money which he did not want, to do an action, which, if known, must brand his name with eternal infamy, and even endanger his life in the most scandalous manner ; and his lordship could have little hopes to keep a thing secret, the very commission of which implied notoriety. Besides, would it have been prudent in the French, supposing that his lordship could have been purchased at any rate, to give such a sum, as one of his rank and fortune would, no doubt, expect, for the very trifling service he could do them : for 'tis plain, the victory is owned to be owing chiefly to the British troops ; so that keeping a small body of cavalry back, could be of very little use to the enemy ; and for this reason, I think, the supposition of his
being

being bribed is absurd to the highest degree.

As to an error in judgment, it is what all human kind are subject to : his lordship, therefore, as a mortal, cannot be supposed exempt from it ; but from his humane character, from that wisdom which he has shewn in the senate, from his admirable disposition in some former military expedition, I think this can hardly be laid to his charge, without incurring the censure of rashness.

As to his disobedience of orders it is not clear that any but general orders were given ; and what party we can suppose his lordship to be influenced by, to blast the laurels of the Hanoverian general, or interrupt the progress of the renowned Prussian, in order to force us to an inglorious peace, is to me so much a mystery, that it seems not to have the least foundation in probability, or even possibility.

His

His lordship has been treated in an unprecedented manner : I do not remember to have read or heard of any general in chief, not to mention his proper quality, that was ever used in such a contemptuous manner before. This, I think, not only an affront upon his lordship, but his constituents and his country ; and as the p—— has been rash in his behaviour, he may also have been wrong in his judgment.

If a just sense of the dignity of that nation, which L—— G—— S—— in some manner had the honour of representing, has been the occasion of his forbearing any thing, which, in his opinion, may not be detrimental to it, is there an Englishman who should not espouse his cause ? at least, I hope, there is not an Englishman who would suffer himself so far to be prejudiced, as to condemn him unheard. The truth will soon be known ; I am convinced

it will not be for his interest to conceal it; and then every doubt will not only be silenced, but, instead of CONDEMNING him, we shall APPLAUD.

I am, SIR, &c.

F I N I S.

